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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the prospects of employment for Canadian youth with mental disabilities and offers a model for secondary vocational programing designed to promote the transition from school to work. An introductory section comments on the bleak outlook for employment for students with disabilities and notes the economic and social consequences. The lack of secondary programing initiatives in Canada is noted; programs that do exist concentrate on training students with mild disabilities and academic motivation problems. The need is noted for extending prevocational training into the upper elementary grades and developing structured vocational programs at junior high levels followed by supervised work experience and school-to-work transition programs and senior high school. A comprehensive secondary vocational program model is espoused which includes modules for entry assessment, prevocational skills, work adjustment, work experience, and transition services. The model is designed to help students acquire skills necessary for working and to bridge the gap between students' school experiences and their post-school environment through school-community linkages. The government of Canada's role in promoting an integrated continuum of services is addressed. Six pages of references are appended. (CL)

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Submission To The Special Senate
Committee on Youth

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DISABLED YOUTH: A COOPERATIVE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM MODEL

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June, 1985

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WESTERN INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRE

Western Industrial Research and Training Centre is a private, nonprofit corporation established in 1968 to research and develop efficient and functional vocational training services for vocationally handicapped Albertans in preparation for competitive employment. Currently, WIRTC operates two facilities in Edmonton that offer vocational training services based on an industrial model to 325 individuals. The philosophy which guides the development and implementation of our programs is that of the individual right to work and contribute to society. The Industrial Model Vocational Training Systems (IMVTS) presently in operation at WIRTC use normal business methods and production standards to systematically train those skills essential to successful integration into the competitive workforce within an environment wherein trainees gain an opportunity to understand employment expectations. The IMVTS and such innovative programs and methods as job analysis, individual vocational plans, work activity training, and community based training ensure that each individual receives relevant, functional, and effective training that culminates in employment. Over the years, WIRTC has become a Western Canadian leader in research and development of vocational training programs that work to improve the job placement success of individuals with serious handicaps.

PREFACE

Western Industrial Research and Training Centre (WIRTC) is pleased to respond to the recent open invitation of the Special Senate Subcommittee on Youth to submit written briefs on problems and issues facing Canadian youth. Our submission focuses on one segment of this population and expresses our longstanding concern with the vocational preparation and employment status of Canadian youth who are vocationally handicapped by mental disabilities. It is pointed out that the employment future for the majority of disabled young persons is particularly bleak and it is suggested that this may be at least partially attributed to a general lack of adequate vocational training in the schools and functional school to work transition services. In response to the perceived need for such specialized programs, we briefly outline a model for a secondary vocational program that would provide adequate preparation for functioning in post-secondary vocational training or employment environments, as well as preparation for making an effective transition to those environments. These objectives are achieved within the program through the integration of education services with those agencies that provide vocational rehabilitation and job placement services to adults. However, the implementation of our program model is dependent on the development of high-level policy initiatives and funding mechanisms to support such linkage of education, vocational rehabilitation, manpower, and social services in a cooperative effort to resolve the problems of handicapped youth in making the transition from school to work. To this end, we sincerely hope that our submission adequately communicates the need for cooperative secondary vocational programs and that the Senate subcommittee report will lead to policy initiatives in support of such efforts.

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DISABLED YOUTH

Qualification for gainful employment is an implied promise of education (Bellamy, Rose, Wilson, & Clarke, 1982; Crysdale, 1980), yet current youth unemployment statistics starkly reveal a promise that has gone unfulfilled for many Canadian young people. Irrespective of the business cycle, Canadian youth have consistently shown a disproportionately high rate of unemployment as compared to other age groups (Sen, 1982). Comprising only one-quarter of the total Canadian labour force (Sen, 1982), those aged 15 to 24 years represent over 45 percent of those persons who are employed (Employment & Immigration Canada, 1984). There are currently over 500,000 persons aged 15 to 24 years recorded as unemployed by the Federal Government (OTF, 1983; Statistics Canada, 1984), but these numbers would be considerably swollen if government statistics were to also include the many young people who have simply given up looking for work, or who have only obtained part-time work when full employment was desired. By some estimates, inclusion of these discouraged youth would mean that as many as a third of all persons aged 15 to 24 years are either unemployed or underemployed.

Canada's post-war performance in the youth labour market has been rather perplexing. Youth unemployment has generally remained high, even during periods when the economy was operating at full capacity, and it has only tended to worsen with economic downswings (Lazar & Conner, 1973; Sen, 1982). Throughout the 1970s the rate of youth unemployment in Canada has consistently been higher than average compared to 11 other major industrial nations included within the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (Employment & Immigration Canada, 1984), and the trend established in the 1970s points to even greater Canadian youth unemployment in the latter half of this decade (Sen, 1982). The ratio of youth to adult unemployment has shown steady growth in Canada; from 17 percent of total unemployment in 1955, to over 40 percent in 1981 (Sinclair, 1981).

However, as bleak as the employment prospects for Canadian youth in general may appear, our disabled[1] youth face an even more

uncertain future upon leaving school. Less than one-third of all students who are seriously handicapped by mental or physical disabilities enter full-time work or further study upon leaving school (Martin, 1972). For the rest, unemployment, exclusion from many adult vocational services, and entrapment in nonrenumerative day activity programs are all too common fates (Bellamy, Sheenan, Horner, & Boles, 1980). Far too few ever attain long term competitive employment of any sort.

The bleak outlook for the majority of students with disabilities after leaving school is even more clearly presented by a number of organizations for the disabled. These have variously estimated that at least 50 percent of all Canadian working-age individuals with disabilities are unemployed (NUGE/COPOH, 1983) and that another 30 percent are underemployed (CCSD, 1980). Unfortunately, recent American survey results suggest that even these discouragingly high estimates may be somewhat optimistic. In the United States, fully 66 percent of working-age disabled males and 81 percent of working-age disabled females are unemployed (Bowe, 1983). Based on these figures and acceptance of Health and Welfare Canada's (1979) estimate that just under ten percent of Canadians may be classified as "disabled" or the Canadian Council on Social Development's (1980) estimate that at least four percent of all Canadians are "severely disabled", it becomes all too apparent that a great many Canadians are unemployed as a consequence of some type of disability.

The economic and social costs of high unemployment have been recognized by all levels of government (OTF, 1983), but the costs incurred are substantially greater for disabled persons. For example, in the United States, persons with disabilities represent 20 percent of all working-age individuals having incomes below the official poverty line, and 46 percent of all working-age individuals receiving social assistance income (Bowe, 1983). But while these figures show

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1 Unless otherwise qualified, the term "disabled" person will refer to: an individual whose prospect of securing, retaining, and advancing in suitable employment has been substantially limited by social and environmental factors as a result of mental or physical impairment.

that persons with disabilities are over-represented among the poor and place a disproportionately large burden on the stretched-thin social "safety net", a job can make all the difference. Whereas in 1981 the "typical" unemployed working-age disabled male in the United States had an income of less than $8,000 (mostly from social assistance), the average full-time employed disabled male earned over $12,000 dollars (Bowe, 1983). Based on these data, it is easily seen that a person with disabilities who remains unemployed can cost society well over $400,000 dollars in assistance payments over a normal working lifetime. In contrast, an individual with severe disabilities entering competitive employment at age 18 years in a lower-skill occupation paying minimum wage could expect lifetime earnings of over $600,000 (Conley, 1973). Today, the monetary benefit of employment would likely be double Conley's 1973 estimate.

Moreover, working individuals would be returning a fair portion of their earnings to society in the form of taxes and CPP/UIC contributions; returns that could be quite substantial. For example, in a paper describing outcomes for a three-year job placement project for individuals with moderate to severe mental retardation, it was reported that the 63 individuals placed into competitive employment grossed over $260,000 in earnings between 1978 and 1981, and contributed over $44,000 to government revenues through pay packet deductions (Wehman, Hill, Goodall, Cleveland, Brooke, & Pentecost, 1982). Similarly, it has been reported that for every dollar spent on vocational rehabilitation services there is a return to government of between $10 and $20 in terms of the ratio of eventual lifetime employment earnings to program costs (Parker & Hansen, 1981). Although these data are American in origin, there is little reason to assume that Canadian figures would be markedly different. Therefore, from a purely economic point of view, it appears cost-effective to spend public dollars on increasing the employment participation of individuals with disabilities.

Unemployment also has serious social consequences for persons with disabilities. This is because employment is a normal and respected

part of life in North America (Schrank, 1978) and is frequently a prerequisite to gaining recognition as a fully competent adult within our work-oriented society (Foss & Peterson, 1981). Employment promotes personal growth, expands the individual's social circle, enhances social status, provides a means for participation in normal activities, and allows the individual to contribute to and feel a part of the community (Bellamy, Sowers, & Bourbeau, 1983). Unemployment, on the other hand, leads to many long-term psychosocial and health problems (Pablo & Gareau, 1985). In many respects, productive and meaningful work is an essential aspect of successful social adjustment and community integration for individuals with severe disabilities (Edgerton, 1979). Work is so important to individual well-being that articles assuring individuals the right to economic security and productive work are included within the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (U.N. General Assembly, 1946). Canada is a signatory to that Declaration. Clearly, even from a purely social standpoint, it is essential to increase the employment participation of our disabled citizens.

While the extremely high level of unemployment for youth in general may be partially attributable to the currently sluggish Canadian economy, such an explanation cannot easily account for the fact that the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is more than double that of nondisabled youth (Sen, 1982). This inequality is particularly disturbing in light of the fact that the feasibility of competitive employment as a goal for many disabled persons has been amply demonstrated (e.g., Brickey & Campbell, 1981; Olshansky & Beach, 1974; Rusch & Schutz, 1979; Wehman, et al, 1982), even during periods of poor economic bouyancy (e.g., Ebert, Bevan, & Dennis, 1983; Halpern, 1973; Whelan & Speake, 1981). Given systematic training and equal employment opportunities, 75 percent of children with mental disabilities, for example, could be completely self-supporting as adults, and another 10 to 15 percent could be at least partially self-supporting (McLeod, 1985). The majority of persons with disabilities are employable (see Bellamy, Horner, & Inman, 1979; Brolin, 1976; Mithaug, 1981; Schutz & Rusch, 1982; Wehman, 1981) and

suitable jobs for persons with various types of disabilities continue to exist and are increasing in many areas (see ECC, 1976; Kohn, 1977; Greenwald, 1984; Rumberger, 1984). These are known possibilities, but the current reality for persons with disabilities that vocationally handicap them is far less positive.

Only approximately 6 to 15 percent of mentally disabled persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services in Canada are presently placed into competitive employment within any given year, and less than half of these individuals manage to maintain their employment beyond six-months post-placement. The factors that prevent persons with disabilities from attaining greater participation in the Canadian workforce are most often unrelated to the individual's actual physical or cognitive limitations (Canada House of Commons, 1981; NUGE/COPOH, 1983). Instead, limitations are imposed by a host of social and educational factors, in particular inadequate prevocational and vocational training in the schools, and a lack of functional school-to-work transition services to bridge the gap between education and employment (CCSD, 1980; NUGE/COPOH, 1983; OFT, 1983; Rosen, Clarke, & Kivitz, 1977; Sprado, 1976; Whelan & Speake, 1981; Wolfensberger, 1979).

Although considerable advances have been made over the years in aid of vocational, technical, and occupational training for students with disabilities at the secondary level, there are still many deficiencies existing in the delivery of these programs (Cavanagh, 1983). To provide quality education for adolescents with more severe disabilities, high school programs must make a commitment to reduce dysfunctional student behavior, develop knowledge and functional skills to enable students to master nonschool environments, and to train salable, entry-level vocational skills (Brolin & Kokaska, 1979). Further, for greater employment participation, disabled persons require in-school programs that will help ease the often difficult transition from the relatively structured school environment to the more complex world of work and adult roles (Cassidy, 1983). For students who are vocationally disadvantaged by physical or

cognitive disabilities, changes in the secondary school approach to prevocational and vocational training, and transition to work could very well make the difference between chronic unemployment and economic self-sufficiency.

USUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS LIMITED

In the last decade numerous changes have taken place with respect to the education of disabled persons. Throughout North America there nas been a movement toward deinstitutionalization of all services to disabled persons and the implementation of social policies that reflect the principles of normalization and equal access (Nirje, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1979). In the United States, legislation such as the 1972 PARC Consent Agreement, the 1973 Renabilitation Act, the 1975 Education for all Handicapped Children Act, the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments, and the 1978 Comprehensive Services and Developmental Disabilities Amendments have had profound influence on improving educational and vocational services to disabled and disadvantaged persons. These legislative initiatives placed a clear responsibility on the public school system in the United States to educate all children and youth to their fullest potential within a "least restrictive" environment. In Canada, no such federal mandate over education exists to force unified policy change in the nation's schools (although our new Constitution with its Charter of Rights and Freedoms may yet play an important role in educational policy change). Nonetheless, the majority of provinces (even those without legislatively mandated public education for disabled children within the regular school system) have implemented education policy guidelines and grant systems that have encouraged the development and implementation of numerous programs for children who require special services in order to attain basic educational goals (Kysela, Anderson, & Marfo, 1981; Smith, 1980).

But the bulk of these program development efforts for disabled students have been focused at the elementary school level where vocational preparation is not emphasized. The general focus on prevention and early intervention has directed both attention and

resources away from the needs of the disabled adolescent (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). Thus, while it is commonly the case that disabled students receive valuable special programming in basic self-help, social, and cognitive skills, and in academic content during their elementary school years, they generally receive little guidance or specialized skill development programming in the secondary school years that would directly assist vocational success (Snart, Barton, & Hillyard, 1983). Few school districts operate special secondary programs for students with more severe disabilities. In most cases, such students are simply placed into a modified program that may include some individualized academic instruction and a few extra periods of industrial arts each week. The predominant theme continues to be one of teaching academic skills.

Regular vocational education programs offered at the junior and senior high school level are quite inadequate to meet the special needs of more severely disabled students (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). Most vocational education classes are found at the senior high school level and are targeted towards regular education students who are not planning on attending college (Coughran & Daniels, 1983). Training is geared towards persons who require no adaptation of the normal learning situation and often requires a certain level of academic competence. Research has demonstrated that such conventional vocational education programs confer no advantage in either gaining or maintaining competitive employment for disabled students (Flynn, 1982). Similarly, the now relatively common "work experience" model used in many high schools to serve the academically-unmotivated student (Canadian Education Association, 1984; McKay & Doherty, 1982) fails to adequately meet the intensive training needs of students with more severe physical or mental disabilities. Only programs that are vocationally relevant, intensive, highly structured and systematic, and which include a supervised work experience component have demonstrated success in helping students with disabilities develop the skills necessary to obtain and maintain competitive employment (Halpern, 1978; Mithaug, 1981; Moss, 1979). Vocational programs are needed that apply direct teaching, systematic programming for

generalization, and careful selection of work skills (Bellamy, et al, 1982).

To provide relevant education for adolescents with more severe disabilities, secondary school programs must differ from the common models of services for disabled elementary students, and also from secondary programs designed for academically-unmotivated students. Meaningful secondary programs cannot be created by simply transporting elementary programs into the high schools. Divergent student needs and the administrative structures of the secondary schools rule out such a transfer and demand a service model designed specifically for the secondary environment and the more adult needs of older disabled students (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). To be adequate, secondary education for more severely disabled students must provide preparation for functioning in post-secondary vocational training or employment environments, and preparation for making an effective transition to those environments (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). These goals can only be achieved through greater integration between school programs and the working world while students are still in school (Canadian Education Association, 1984). Such linkage could be accomplished through the development of cooperative program and funding agreements between the school districts, at both the provincial and local levels, and those agencies that provide vocational rehabilitation and job placement services to disabled adults (Cavanagh, 1983).

At Western Industrial Research and Training Centre (WIRTC), we believe that the substantial number of special needs students leaving the public education system without basic vocational skills contribute significantly to the problem of unemployment. It is our experience that many disabled individuals entering post-secondary vocational training settings are so lacking in those basic skills and behaviors generic to most vocational tasks that they cannot immediately enter and benefit from a work training program. What such individuals require is the extension of prevocational training programs into the upper elementary grades and the development of specialized, highly structured and supervised vocational training

programs at the junior high school level, followed by supervised work experience and specialized school-to-work transition programs in senior high school. With such a continuum in place, the mandates of both academic and vocational education would merge and the eventual transition from school to work or further vocational training would be made far easier.

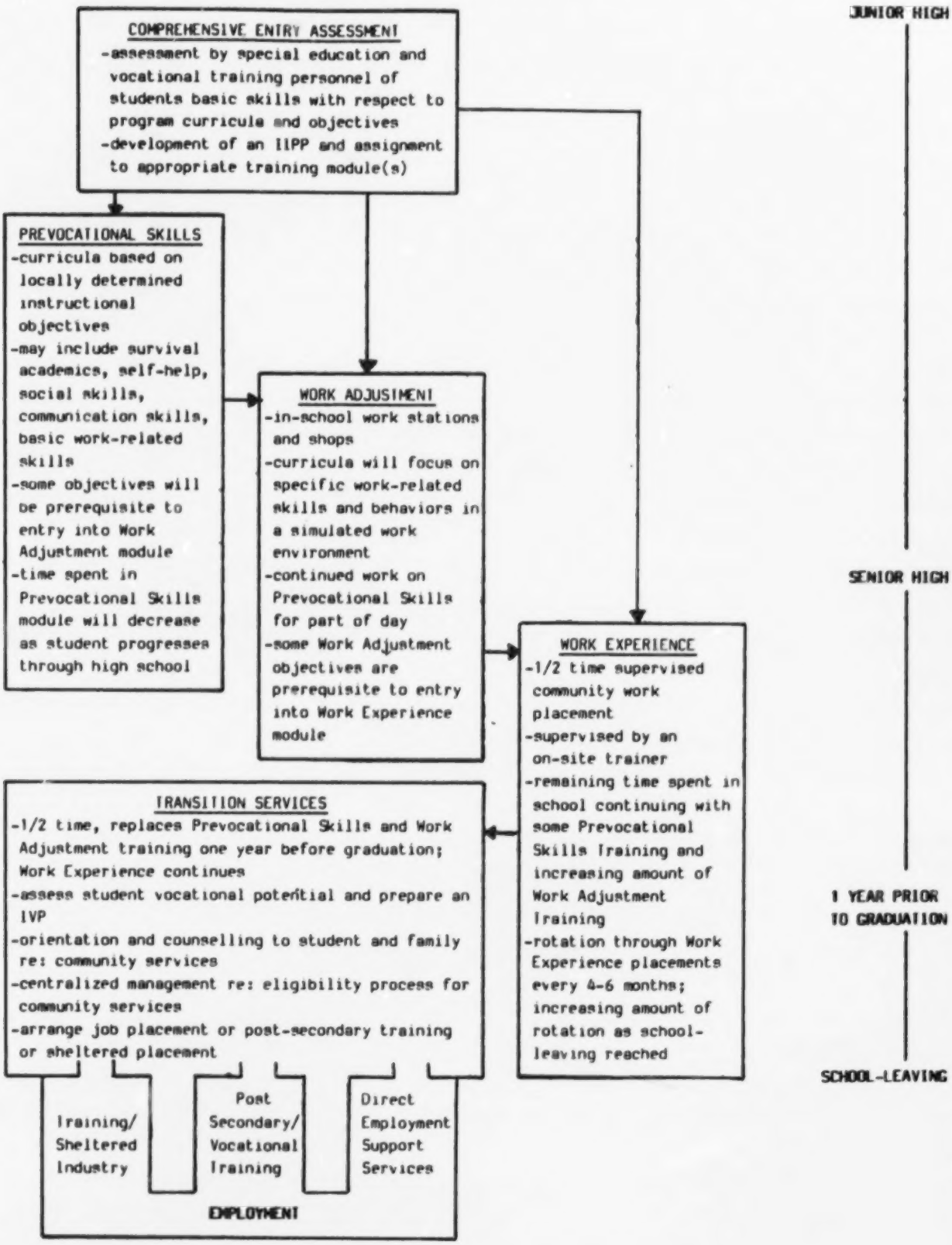
A COMPREHENSIVE SECONDARY VOCATIONAL PROGRAM MODEL

To achieve an effective continuum of vocational preparation and improve the employability of students with disabilities that vocationally handicap them, WIRTC has developed a model for a comprehensive secondary vocational education program that includes supervised work experience and school to work transition components. The model consists of five integrated service modules, that are activated in junior high, and culminate in either job placement or post-secondary training after high school graduation (see Figure 1). The program is designed to integrate vocational education services in the secondary schools with post-secondary vocational training/ rehabilitation and job search/placement services operated and funded by the provincial and federal governments. Based on a model of the school to work transition process developed by the United States Office of Special Education Services (OSERS) (cf., Will, 1984), the WIRTC model was originally prepared in response to a request for submissions on secondary education in Alberta made by the Minister of Education for Alberta, the Honourable David King (see Ebert, Dennis, Mueller, & Bevan, 1984; Ebert, Dennis, Mueller, & Vargo, 1985; Ebert, Dennis, Mueller, Vargo, & Bevan, 1985).

Although education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities are presumed to be provincial responsibilities, the world of work and the employment concerns of youth are certainly not under sole provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, the ideas presented within our submission to the Minister of Education for the Province of Alberta (Ebert, et al., 1984) also have relevance to the mandates of the Government of Canada and the Special Senate Committee on Youth. This is because education and employment are not separate and divorced

Figure 1

Comprehensive Secondary Vocational Program


JUNIOR HIGH
COMPREHENSIVE ENTRY ASSESSMENT
-assessment by special education and vocational training personnel of students basic skills with respect to program curricula and objectives
-development of an IIPP and assignment to appropriate training module(s)
PREVOCATIONAL SKILLS
-curricula based on locally determined instructional objectives
-may include survival academics, self-help, social skills, communication skills, basic work-related skills
-some objectives will be prerequisite to entry into Work Adjustment module
-time spent in Prevocational Skills module will decrease as student progresses through high school
WORK ADJUSTMENT
-in-school work stations and shops
-curricula will focus on specific work-related skills and behaviors in a simulated work environment
-continued work on Prevocational Skills for part of day
-some Work Adjustment objectives are prerequisite to entry into Work Experience module
SENIOR HIGH
WORK EXPERIENCE
-1/2 time supervised community work placement
-supervised by an on-site trainer
-remaining time spent in school continuing with some Prevocational Skills Training and increasing amount of Work Adjustment Training
-rotation through Work Experience placements every 4-6 months; increasing amount of rotation as school-leaving reached
1 YEAR PRIOR TO GRADUATION
TRANSITION SERVICES
-1/2 time, replaces Prevocational Skills and Work Adjustment training one year before graduation; Work Experience continues
-assess student vocational potential and prepare an IVP
-orientation and counselling to student and family re: community services
-centralized management re: eligibility process for community services
-arrange job placement or post-secondary training or sheltered placement
SCHOOL-LEAVING
Training/ Sheltered Industry
Post Secondary/ Vocational Training
Direct Employment Support Services
EMPLOYMENT

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aspects of an individual's life, but instead are points along a continuum of personal development that runs from birth to death. Persons with disabilities, in particular, are not well served by government jurisdictional boundaries that create gaps in the services they require to aid movement from childhood to the adult world of productive work, personal independence, and responsibility.

Entry Assessment Module:

The first component of the program provides a means of assessing the entry level skills and educational/vocational potential of each special needs student entering the junior high school system. This assessment is envisioned as a multidisciplinary process that will include classroom and industrial arts teachers, parents, and specialists in both special education and vocational rehabilitation. In some cases, other professionals such as psychologists, physicians, physiotherapists, or speech and language therapists might also be involved. Assessment will involve both standardized norm-referenced and criterion-referenced instruments and situational or behavioral assessment techniques, and will occur within each student's natural environment where possible. The focus will be on assessing functional academic, social, practical, and prevocational skills domains. The goal is to discover which instructional objectives have already been mastered, to develop an Individual Program Plan (IPP) that includes both educational and vocational objectives (see Ebert, Harris, Dube, & Bevan, 1983; Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982), and to assign each student to the most suitable training module(s). Most students will likely be assigned to the prevocational skills module, but some may be directly assigned to the more advanced work adjustment module, or even the work experience module.

Prevocational Skills Module:

The prevocational skills module is an entry level phase which develops basic work support behaviors and skills that appear to be common requirements of work or work preparation programs (Mithaug, 1978). These may include: basic academic skills (e.g., "survival" arithmetic and reading, telling time), crucial self-help and

independent living skills that are functional within the local community (e.g., grocery shopping, using public transportation, banking services, pay telephones), basic social and interpersonal skills (e.g., appropriate greeting, appropriate behavior in common social situations, social problem-solving, dealing with criticism), personal hygiene (e.g., appropriate attire and appearance, personal care), and such personal qualities as promptness, responsiveness to instruction, ability to attend to task, and work tolerance (Bellamy, et al., 1982). Prevocational training should prepare students to function as independently and productively as possible in a wide variety of community environments, teach skills in natural extraschool environments as appropriate, and focus on chronological-age-appropriate skills (Brown, Certo, Belmore, & Crowner, 1976). Specific instructional objectives and curricula are chosen on the basis of their relevance and functionality within the local community and as preparation for futher vocational training (see Brown, Branston-McClean, Baumgart, Vincent, Falvey, & Schroeder, 1979; Mithaug, 1981; Rusch & Mithaug, 1980; Taylor, Close, Carlson, & Larrabee, 1981; Wehman & Bates, 1978).

Students would enter the prevocational skills curriculum at a level commensurate with their assessed individual needs and move through the curriculum sequence at their own pace. Students may be initially placed in the prevocational skills module full-time until certain skills that are prerequisite to inclusion in the activities of the more advanced work adjustment module are acquired. When these prerequisite skills have been learned to a specified criterion level, individual students may be placed part-time into the work adjustment module while continuing to develop any remaining prevocational skills to mastery levels.

In the prevocational skills module, all objectives would be trained within the school and surrounding community without use of industrial arts shops or actual work settings. Many skills could be taught in the school using simulated work tasks (e.g., Match-Sort-Assemble Program, Mithaug & Stewart, 1978; Work Skills

Training Kit, Whelan, 1977); whereas others could be taught in the community (Brown, et al., 1979). In either case, assessment of skill acquisition would be continuous and direct.

Work Adjustment Module:

The work adjustment module is a means to develop within the school setting two domains: work personality (i.e., self-concept as a worker and personal motivation for work), and work-related behaviors and competencies generic to many vocations (i.e., work habits, physical and mental skills applicable to work, and work-related interpersonal skills). Instructional objectives will be based on empirical data regarding those generic skills and behaviors employers view as most important to employment success and tenure (e.g., Alper, 1985; Rusch, Schutz, & Agran, 1982), and will be taught within the industrial arts shops and/or simulated work environments within the school. As well as training basic skills required in a number of jobs with similar descriptions (job clusters), students will also be exposed to the various tools and equipment that they will encounter in actual working situations. While working on a number of production projects, students will learn proper techniques for operating equipment and using hand tools, as well as basic safety rules and procedures.

Since the work adjustment module is designed as a bridge between prevocational skills activities and the on-the-job skills training that will occur in the later work experience module, it is expected that the majority of students will initially split their instructional time between prevocational skills activities and work adjustment activities. As more advanced prevocational objectives are attained, the proportion of time spent in prevocational skills activities will decrease and the proportion spent in work adjustment will increase. As in the prevocational skills module, the instructional objectives included within the work adjustment module will be hierarchically sequenced, with earlier objectives prerequisite for entrance into the more advanced work experience module. On mastery of criterion level of skills, students will enter the work experience module. As in the previous module, assessment of skill acquisition will be continuous

and direct.

Work Experience Module:

This is the most advanced of the three training modules and is designed to enhance the employability of students by giving them actual work experience within the community. Work experience will be integrated with half-time continued prevocational and work adjustment training in the school, and will be used to train generalized work support behaviors and specific salable job skills within an actual work setting. Based on the supported work training model (see Kraus & MacEachron, 1982; Revell, Wehman, & Arnold, 1984), the work experience module will provide for direct training of occupational and job-related social skills on the job site. Work experience will also permit students to explore occupations to facilitate career choices, and help maintain motivated school performance.

Envisioned as a half-time temporary placement in an industrial or commercial establishment, each work experience placement would be individually arranged and tailored to each student's needs. Once an appropriate community job is found, job requirements would be carefully analyzed (see Belmore & Brown, 1978; Colvin, 1983) to provide a basis for identifying students' behavioral assets and deficiencies and assist in defining specific training objectives for each student. Each student will then be trained to meet the various job requirements at the selected work site by an on-site vocational trainer who would coach the student until he or she is thoroughly familiar with all crucial work requirements and is comfortable in the work environment. Job-site supervision will be carried out by vocational rehabilitation professionals who, unlike special educators, are experienced in both job analysis and on-the-job training methods. Once job skills are well established this site supervision would be downgraded to part-time supervision or occasional site visits.

Placing students in real work settings will allow them to actually experience the conditions of a given job and compare their work abilities against competitive industrial standards of quality and

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quantity. Moreover, the work setting will provide vocational teachers an unsurpassed opportunity to observe how each student reacts to the daily stresses and pressures of work, supervision, co-workers, demands and criticism, and many other aspects of the work place. Such observations could then lead to further training and instruction on specific weak areas within the more structured and controlled school setting. In this regard, in-school training would continue along the lines of the earlier work adjustment module but could now include specific instruction to further enhance and reinforce skills required in each student's job placement. In many cases, students would be encouraged to try more than one job placement during their period of work experience enrollment as a means of increasing skills generalization.

Transition Services Module:

Regardless of the quality of earlier school preparation, transition is a critical period for all adolescents, particularly those who are mentally or physically disabled. For disabled adolescents, explicit and extensive planning is necessary to successfully bridge the gap between school experience and adult life (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982). This is because leaving school entails exchanging the security of a single service-- education-- for the confusion of multiple services, each with different eligibility requirements and goals. Typically this leads to a functional reduction in support services at a point in time when community expectations for independence and productivity increase. Moreover, leaving school forces adolescents and their parents to consider a number of difficult and important decisions regarding residence, further education/training or work selection, income maintenance, mobility, independent socialization, altered family relationships, and so on (Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982).

The transition services module of our secondary vocational program is a mechanism for smoothing the often turbulent school to work transition for students with vocational handicaps. The objective of this service module is to develop awareness of factors and services in

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tne community that will support successful adult living, avoid institutionalization or nonrenumerative day activity programs, and prevent the interruption of needed services. This objective is accomplished through the supply of a numoer of evaluation, counselling, and planning services prior to school-leaving that are directed toward the integration of students' school experience with their next environment.

One year prior to school-leaving, regardless of progress made to that point in other program modules, all students will be assigned to the transition services module. This module will include several components: (1) a review of progress in the program and assessment of exit level skills and motivation; (2) development of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) that will outline a set of decisions about particular services desired for a student when he or she leaves the educational system; (3) counselling students and their parents with respect to appropriate post-secondary education/training or vocational options; and (4) familiarizing students and their parents with a broad range of available community support services, and alerting them to available options and the steps necessary to avail themselves of appropriate assistance in making the transition from school to work or post-secondary placement. Other transition services might include: helping students and their parents apply for necessary post-secondary services, arranging meetings with representatives of extraschool agencies to facilitate program entry and follow-up, arranging for the proper and timely transfer of student records (see Kayser & Brown, 1981), and arranging part-time extraschool trial placements where appropriate.

Although the transitional services module will be primarily school-based and forms an integral part of the total vocational program for disabled students, its success will be dependent on the active participation of private and public sector agencies at the municipal, provincial, and national level that supply post-secondary services to individuals with mental and physical disabilities. This is because the majority of services to be included within the

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transition services module will be supplied by personnel from such extraschool agencies. In this manner resources existing within the greater community can be linked with the schools to assure that the vocationally handicappped student is offered the widest possible range of opportunities for post-school success.

At the school board/district level, such service linkage would necessitate the formation of a "school-community linkage committee" (SCLC) comprised of representatives from school, home, social service agencies, vocational rehabilitation, and business/industry (Goldstein & Garwood, 1983). The SCLC would have the task of identifying the resources in the community and determining the most effective means of integrating these with the school's programs and resources. Of course, the role of the SCLC would go beyond simply integrating the various services to be included within the transition module. The SCLC would also develop procedures for communication between involved agencies, create a resource bank of employers, establish mechanisms to create community awareness, set local policies for program implementation, and develop necessary cooperative agreements for service delivery and funding (Goldstein & Garwood, 1983).

In summary, it may be seen that our secondary vocational program model is designed to accomplish two very important and basic goals: helping disabled students within the secondary schools build the skills necessary for the transition from school to the working world, and bridging the gap between student's school experience and their post-school environment through school-community linkage. The program's mission is to assist students with moderate to severe disability in their transition from school to employment through provision of the following services.

* the development of a career education curriculum designed around a set of instructional objectives that are directly relevant to vocational success in the local community;
* the comprehensive assessment of all students with disabilities entering junior high with respect to basic self-help, social, communication, academic, and work-related skills;
* the establishment of individual instructional program plans which include vocational instruction plans at an early point in the student's secondary career;

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* the training of work relevant skills in a hierarchically arranged system that is graduated from full-time in school, to part-time in school and part-time in community work setting, to eventual full-time community placement;
* the evaluation of student progress and assessment of skills and competencies prior to school-leaving and the preparation of individual Transition Plans for each exiting student;
* the provision of basic orientation to students and their parents on the availability of community-based services;
* the provision of centralized case management services to guide students through eligibility processes for community services;
* assisting students in obtaining permanent competitive employment, or an appropriate post-secondary training placement, or a sheltered workshop/industry placement;
* encouraging direct and continued contact between school personnel and persons in charge of placements in vocational training programs, job placement for disabled workers, and residential settings to provide valuable circular feedback; ensuring that school curricula will remain relevant and up to date, and that consumers will be aware of the skills they may expect from graduates of public school programs.

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S ROLE

To this point in our submission we have outlined a model for a secondary level vocational program for students with disabilities that focuses on preparation for transition to the adult world of work; either directly upon school-leaving or after further vocational training. Although the idea for special vocational needs programs such as our model is not new (Cavanagh, 1983; Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982) and similar programs are presently operating in the United States (e.g., Goldstein & Garwood, 1983; Rise Incorporated, 1984; Vautour, Stocks, & Kolek, 1983), implementation of the model outlined in this submission still presents a number of special challenges to service providers, government policy-makers, and school administrators alike. The most formidable of these challenges comes at the government policy-level; namely, the integration of education, employment, vocational rehabilitation, and social services resources to supply the continuum of service and funding necessary for such a comprehensive program.

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Although our program may be considered clearly within the mandate of the educational system and, therefore, a matter of provincial concern, it is aimed squarely at improving the employability of students with disabilities upon leaving the school system-- an area that falls within the federal mandate. When students leave school and enter the labour market they also move from agencies of provincial jurisdiction (schools) to those of federal jurisdiction (Employment & Immigration Canada). In terms of government policy such jurisdictional change occurs instantly at the moment of school-leaving, but the actual transition from school to work is a developmental process that occurs over some time. Such a developmental process cannot be adequately addressed by separate service systems. Rather, successful transition from school to work requires an integrated continuum of services.

Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) was established to develop and administer employment, immigration, and unemployment insurance programs and services. It is involved in developing and administering employment transition programs such as adult training, work experience, youth training, and job creation schemes. Through such programs and its Canada Employment Centres, the EIC is to some extent already involved in the counselling of young people for the transition from school to work. Unfortunately, EIC provides no vocational guidance services within the schools, as this is deemed a matter of provincial responsibility. Within the schools, EIC provides only counselling materials and promotes vocational guidance.

As stated earlier in our submission, the transition from school to adult roles may be viewed as a part of a developmental continuum which runs from birth to eventual death. The present arrangement of jurisdictional change, from provincial to federal, that occurs when the individual leaves school for employment creates a break in the developmental continuum and a gap in services that is particularly difficult for persons with disabilities to bridge. For special needs students, the jurisdictional confusion at transition is further worsened by the fact that many services they require come under the

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jurisdiction of the health and welfare system, which is cost-shared by the provinces and the federal government. Vocational rehabilitation services fall within this last jurisdiction.

One possible solution to this problem is for the Government of Canada, through Employment and Immigration Canada and Health and Welfare Canada, to negotiate cost sharing agreements with the provincial ministries of education for the development and implementation of transition services programs for disabled students within the secondary schools. Precedents for such agreements have already been set. For example, Employment and Immigration Canada, through a cooperative venture with Alberta Manpower and Alberta Education, is providing pilot project funds to Alberta school districts interested in offering special summer intervention programs for potential secondary school drop-outs. These school-based programs are aimed at assisting students in exploring their educational and career aspirations, developing essential employee attributes, and encouraging students to continue their education or seek further post-secondary training appropriate to their career aspirations. Similar cooperative agreements might be arranged to assist disabled students in making a successful transition from school to work.

Students with disabilities require education that focuses early attention on developing important vocational survival skills and on providing needed work experience. To improve the future of vocationally handicapped youth it is crucial that the Senate Committee on Youth consider recommendations for federal government initiatives through Employment and Immigration Canada and Health and Welfare Canada that will support the development and implementation of secondary special needs vocational programs that link education, manpower, vocational rehabilitation, and social services resources to ensure adequate school-to-work transition for those adolescents who presently face the most uncertain future.

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